

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY PROVIDES \$20 MILLION FOR WESTERN FARMERS

Funds to Assist Farmers With Crop Losses Caused by 2004 Storms

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today approved the reallocation of \$20 million appropriated by the 2005 Hurricane Recovery Act to provide additional assistance to farmers in Western North Carolina. Part of the Operation Brighter Day relief effort, this money will provide necessary aid to farmers who did not receive assistance from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and includes growers of crops such as Christmas trees, nurseries, woody ornamentals, sod, turf, grass and hay.

“These farmers grow crops that are essential to North Carolina’s economy, but which are not covered by traditional USDA crop-loss assistance programs,” Easley said. “We must do all we can to help them recover from the catastrophic damage caused last year by Hurricanes Frances and Ivan.”

The 2005 Hurricane Recovery Act was written to provide North Carolina farmers with a supplement to USDA assistance, but only allowed such aid if the farmer already qualified for USDA assistance. Because these farmers’ crops did not qualify for USDA assistance under its strict guidelines, the farmers did not qualify for programs funded under the Recovery Act. As such, many North Carolina farmers were left without any governmental aid.

However, the Recovery Act does provide the governor the authority to create new programs as necessary and to reallocate funds to such programs. Easley has established a new temporary program, the N.C. Crop Disaster Program (NCCDP), and will reallocate an additional \$20 million to this program to provide crop loss assistance equivalent to that of the USDA Crop Disaster Program.

While USDA assistance was selective about which crops were eligible, NCCDP will provide assistance to any farmer who has a significant and verified loss. Assessments have already been conducted to verify which farmers qualify for the new program.

This \$20 million reallocation is in addition to the \$11.7 million appropriated for agriculture in the 2005 Hurricane Recovery Act. For details, see chart on other side.

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